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ABSTRACT

This study represents an initial effort to gather information about new teacher-induction relationships that can be used to establish criteria for judging organizational theory. Its purpose was to assess whether a pupil-control or an organizational-defensive routine model characterizes new teacher-induction programs. Data were gathered from two Texas school districts that have implemented new teacher-induction programs as part of state requirements. Findings indicate that a substantive amount of evidence supports the notion that miscommunication is occurring among new teachers, veteran teachers, and administrators on issues of new-teacher induction. Content analysis supports the notion that miscommunication is occurring at several different levels between new teachers as well as between new teachers and administrators. Hence, the organization appears to be using defensive routines to counteract the intent of state requirements that seek to prevent new teachers from feeling isolated and burnt out. Specifically, the governing values in both school districts were centered on the issue of student discipline or a custodial orientation. In one district the shared governing value of the organization was the notion that student discipline was critical to quality instruction. (Contains 28 references.) (DFR)

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Abstract

This study represents an initial effort to gather information about new teacher induction relationships that can be used to establish criteria for judging organizational theory. The purpose of this study was to assess whether a pupil control (Hoy, 2000) or an organizational defensive routine (Argyris, 1999) model characterizes new teacher induction programs. Data was gathered from two Texas school districts that have implemented new teacher induction programs as part of state requirements.

Exploring New Teacher Induction Relationships:
A Path to Establishing a Dominant Organizational Model for Schools

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Exploring New Teacher Induction Relationships:

A Path to Establishing a Dominant Organizational Model for Schools

Since the late 1980's and continuing to the present, the increasing threat of teacher shortages on educational quality have drawn legislative attention to new teacher induction programs (Texas State Board for Educator Certification Panel on Novice Teacher Induction Support, 1998; Halford, 1999; State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC), 2000). Clearly, effective action is essential. Novice teachers from across the nation are leaving the classroom in record numbers. In Texas alone, over a third of new teachers leave the profession within the first three years of service (SBEC, 2000). Unless this issue is resolved satisfactorily, the nation's schools will be adversely affected in the near future.

To enhance teacher retention, schools across the country have examined and implemented programs to assist and acculturate new teachers to their job during their first few years. New teacher induction programs have demonstrated effectiveness in raising the instructional proficiency of novice teachers (Berliner, 1986; Hurling-Austin, 1992), facilitating a new teacher's assimilation into the profession (Lortie, 1975; Shem, 1997; Schermpf, Sparkes & Templin, 1993) and reducing attrition (Colbert & Wolfe, 1992; Frazer, 1998; Odell & Ferraro, 1992). In contrast, formal mentoring programs have been found to undermine the development of a genuine learning community within a school by limiting who can provide help (Gehrke, 1991; Tellez, 1992), and the nature of the help provided (Cady, Schaak-Distad, & Germundsen, 1998; Gratch, 1998;). Additionally, no significant differences in teacher turnover rates were found to exist among Texas school districts whether a formal induction program was offered or not (Ruff, 1998). Furthermore, those districts that implemented state mandated induction programs had significantly lower

student achievement scores. To make sense of these contradictions, a dominant organizational model is needed to explain the operational relationships that exist within schools.

Although there is a number of potential organizational models that provide explanation to the patterns seen within schools (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Deal & Peterson, 1999; Senge, 2001; Shairitz & Ott, 2001; Wheatley, 1998), only two models were selected for study. These models were selected based on their ability to define a wide variety of events pertaining to the relationships occurring within schools and to account for the contradictions in the literature on new teacher induction programs.

One explanation that accounts for a variety of school relationships and for the contradictions seen in new teacher induction programs is provided by Hoy (2000). Specifically, pupil control persists in being a salient aspect of school life resulting in a custodial culture within public schools. As a result, new teachers discount the humanistic ideology of teacher education programs and become increasingly custodial in their relationships with both students and other teachers as they are socialized into their professional role. Indeed, student teachers become more custodial in ideology as they experience student teaching. This ideology increases through the first year of teaching and levels off during the second year (Hoy, 1969; Hoy & Woolfolk, 1990). However, an inverse relationship was demonstrated between custodial attitude and increased technical competence and subject matter specialization within teachers (Lunnenburg, 2000). These two points connect the notion that when the status of an educator is threatened, a custodial means is often used to achieve control over the situation. Given that additional opportunities for professional skill appraisal in the form of lesson plan reviews, classroom

observations, and methods justification are inherent in many induction programs; additional sources of threat come with a formal induction program. Therefore, districts with serial induction, "one size fits all" programs tend to increase custodial orientations and erode creativity, risk-taking, and innovation, which in turn leads to decreased student achievement.

A second potential explanatory model is provided in the description of organizational defensive routines (Argyris, 1993, 1999). Organizational defensive routines are skillful actions that are executed immediately and automatically, often without the actors' conscience attention, to inhibit people from experiencing embarrassment or threat (Argyris, 1993). They fulfill a basic need for safety, but curtail inquiry and limit individual as well as organizational learning. Such defensive strategies are learned at an early stage and reinforced by cultural and organizational norms. Through such defensive actions and policies, errors are not confronted or corrected which impacts organizational decisions and problem solving, and results in less effective organizational performance. In effect, misunderstandings among people working together occur over a variety of topics. These misunderstandings are never corrected because to do so would threaten the existing relationships among group members. Therefore, the evidence alluding to the misunderstood information is never discussed openly and actively repressed within the group. A classic example of such a defensive routine is found in the childhood fable of the Emperor's New Clothes. Because personal threat was great to members of the Emperor's court and embarrassment was great to the Emperor, no one acknowledged that the Emperor wore no clothes. Strategies were skillfully used by all to *by-pass* and cover-up the facts as

well as cover-up the cover-ups. There was a circular reinforcing process sustaining the

cover-up going from the individual, to the group and back to the individual.

This study represents an initial effort to gather information about new teacher induction relationships that can be used to establish criteria for judging organizational theory. The purpose of this study was to assess which of two theoretical frameworks described above is best supported by data gathered from two Texas school districts. By determining a dominant model, practice improvements can be more effectively inferred and tested. The results of these targeted tests may lead to an improved explanatory model and practices for the field. Specifically, this study explores the question, do the patterns seen in induction relationships among new teachers, veteran teachers and administrators support a pupil control model (Hoy, 2000), an organizational defense routine model (Argyris, 1999), neither, or both?

Method

Participants

Using the data from the 151 school districts randomly selected by Ruff (1998), a school district claiming to have no formal induction program in 1998 was selected and matched based on demographic characteristics with a district claiming to have a program composed of both mentoring and orientation activities. The former district, Riverside ISD, implemented a mentoring program, which was in its first year during the collection of data. The latter district, Springdale ISD, had established a mentor program more than 5 years prior and the program was administered cooperatively with a local private university. Each district had at least three campuses, from each campus two new teachers, two veteran teachers, and an administrator were interviewed. Of the 12 new teachers interviewed, three

were male and nine were female. Ten were just beginning their second semester teaching. One was beginning her third semester and the other teacher was approximately 5 weeks into her first semester of teaching at the time of the interview. All of the new teachers interviewed were in their twenties and were graduated from traditional teacher preparation programs at public universities within the state.

The gender of the veteran teachers was divided with four being male and eight being female. All veteran teachers had more than 5 years experience within the school district, however, nine of the twelve had more than 10 years experience with three having more than twenty years experience in the profession. Most veteran teachers interviewed appeared to be in their late thirties to early fifties. Two teachers claimed to be over sixty years of age.

Most of the administrators interviewed were the school principal, but two of the six were vice principals. Four of the administrators were male and two were female. All were between thirty-five and fifty years old. Four administrators had been to the school for more than six years with one being in the same position for more than 10 years. Two principals were in the position less than 2 years. One of these two was beginning his second year as a high school principal, but had been the principal of a middle school for more than four years. The other principal was beginning her second semester as a principal having been a school counselor for more than five years prior her selection as principal.

Selection of teachers to be interviewed was based on their conference period schedule. Furthermore, a school administrator selected approximately two-thirds of those interviewed. The researcher selected the remaining teachers, recruiting from the hallways and the teacher's lounge.

Instrumentation

Interviews were semi-structured with questions focusing on four specific areas—perceptions on teaching, support to new teachers, obstacles new teachers face, and the effectiveness of district programs. All interviews were recorded on audiotape except for one based on the individual's request (notes were taken in place of the audiotape).

Consideration was given to providing each participant with a Pupil Control Ideology (PCI) Form (Willower, Eidell & Hoy, 1967). However, it was not used for two reasons. First, as noted above, a number of studies have used the PCI to establish that new teachers do become more custodial as they are inducted into the profession (Hoy, 1969; Hoy & Woolfolk, 1990; Lunnenburg, 2000). Use of the PCI was likely to yield the same results as previous studies, but still not provide the data appropriate to compare the two differing models. Secondly, and somewhat related to the issue of appropriateness, the PCI was specifically designed to test the pupil control model. To assess the robustness of both models, measures and collaborating phenomena must be gathered that are not directly linked to each model, but linked to the constructs that the model represents. There is currently no quantitative model that could be found that is routinely used to establish support for the organizational routine model (Argyris, 1999). Support for this model is based on qualitative methods, including action research (Argyris, 1993) and key personal interviews. However, because these data collection strategies are broadly applied to many models in many fields of inquiry (Business, Sociology, Psychology, Education), there should not exist a predetermined bias from using such methods. Therefore, qualitative methods such as the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) should provide a reasonable means of assessment. Accordingly, an analysis of the interview content

provides was used as the means for assessment. Specifically, it addresses how much of the interview content reflects pupil control issues and in what context do these issues appear when participants are provided open-ended questions.

Procedures

Teachers were interviewed during their conference periods or immediately after school. On most campuses the interviews took place in the teacher's classroom; however, in two schools, a specific room was provided for the interviews to take place. Within several days of the interviews, the information was transcribed and coded as outlined below. Hypotheses about the consequences of specific assumptions within the context of the campus culture were fed back to some members at each school district as a member check for validating the information.

Analysis of Data

Using the constant comparison method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), each transcript was coded for five types of assumptions—values, appropriate action, sources of information, boundaries and timing. The highlighted words, phrases and sentences in each color (type of assumption) were then reviewed across category (new teacher, administrator, veteran teacher) and campus and district to determine existing patterns. These assumptions were then compiled to highlight common governing values and appropriate strategies.

In addition to looking at the underlying common assumptions, the content of the interviews was reviewed to determine the existence and frequency of custodial referents, such as teacher control of students and administrator control of teachers. The content of the transcripts was also reviewed and cross-referenced to determine if referents of miscommunication were made.

Results

Based on the data collected, a substantive amount of evidence supports the notion that miscommunication is occurring among new teachers, veteran teachers and administrators on issues of new teacher induction and, that the locus for miscommunication is undismissible. Content analysis supports the notion that miscommunication is occurring at several different levels between new teachers and veteran teachers as well as between new teachers and administrators. Specifically, new teachers, veteran teachers and administrators all had different views as to what new teachers needed in the way of support and what obstacles new teachers faced and how that support should be provided. New teachers were generally reluctant to ask for assistance. On the other hand, veteran teachers and mentors expected the novice to ask for help when help was needed. For example in

Springdale ISD (A pseudonym), a novice teacher explained that she felt it was her responsibility to know what to do rather than to always ask questions. At the same school, a veteran teacher at the same school explained why it is best to wait and be asked for help. I know if I asked they would help, but I am always asking and I feel like it's my responsibility rather than theirs. They have just as much stress in their life so they can't always help me out with my job. I hate to always be the girl with so many questions. (New Teacher: Riverside ISD)

You need to wait for the new teacher to ask you for help. That way you know that she is ready to learn. If you don't wait, you can easily overwhelm her or at best waste your time by talking about things that she is not going to grasp. I have seen many new teachers and it is best to wait until they ask you for help. (Veteran Teacher: Riverside ISD)

It is now your classroom and you have to figure out what to do with it, how to teach and what rules to set...the mentors help some, of course everyone is busy. (New Teacher: Springdale ISD)

If you are afraid to ask for help then you're not going to last long here in this profession. You have to be willing to ask because you're dealing with other people's children and you gotta (sic) do the right thing, so

You have to be willing to ask questions. (Veteran Teacher: Springdale ISD)

New teachers and veteran teachers at all the schools in both districts expressed

similar sentiments. Both groups waited for an interaction to be initiated by the other.

Furthermore, new teachers had an expectation or desire for more collegiality and faculty interaction than was occurring at their schools. For example:

Teacher prep never prepared me to teach math. I have the course work and the knowledge, but if I can't simplify to doesn't work. There needs to be more interaction in the schools among teachers. (New Teacher: Springdale ISD)

I make it a point to say, "I'm here if you need me," and people do come. (Veteran Teacher: Springdale ISD)

With teaching, I could be in here all day and not see another adult, but with coaching we are all in there together. We travel together on the bus, we go to games, and we talk about things. I don't have to seek out somebody because they are right there. (New Teacher: Riverside ISD)

You help new teachers by sharing materials and sharing stories. (Veteran Teacher: Riverside ISD)

Furthermore, miscommunication was not limited to interactions between new teachers and veteran teachers, but extended between new teachers and administrators as well, as demonstrated by the following remarks.

The VP came by the classroom to observe for a minute or two. No feedback was given. It made me feel nervous and uncomfortable with him just popping in. (New Teacher: Riverside ISD)

I work with new teachers a lot giving them pointers and suggestions. Mainly this occurs as I am out and about. (Administrator: Riverside ISD)

Administrators see increased visibility and programs, such as the mentoring program and new teacher orientation programs, as the means to help new teachers, but also see

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experience as the primary route to competency. Conversely, new teachers seemed to view these programs as bureaucratic requirements and not as the support structures that were intended.

The mentor program has made a difference. It eases teachers on board. It helps them through the rough spots. (Administrator: Springdale ISD)

The other teachers and I stuck together. The mentor was a crutch if you needed anything. (New Teacher: Springdale ISD)

I don't have a mentor... I mean I do have a person assigned but I forgot who it is.... At the beginning of the year, he always seemed to be busy, so ... I chose not to ... nice guy ... but I chose not to go to him. (New Teacher: Springdale ISD)

The orientation program is a big help because many teachers have no perception of where the kids come from. (Administrator: Riverside ISD)

All the new teachers have to go on a tour of the city. They explain the history and show you what is notable. (New Teacher: Riverside ISD)

I didn't expect children to not know their ABCs. I was not fully prepared for the low level that exists. I was able to observe remedial reading classes for about two weeks before I started and that helped. (New Teacher: Riverside ISD)

It is very overwhelming for teachers when they first come in. They have to get acclimated to the situation—working with students, lesson plans, faculty meetings, and paperwork. (Administrator: Springdale ISD)

There are a lot of pressures of it being your own classroom and it's all up to you. Trying to figure out what works and what doesn't work. Learning to record everything. (New Teacher: Springdale ISD)

Student discipline was a common theme across all groups—administrators, veteran teachers and new teachers. Yet, each group focuses on different aspects of student discipline but uses similar words to describe these different meanings. Again, creating the potential for miscommunication about the topic, but never discussing these assumptions openly. It should be noted that at no time during the interview did the researcher ask about

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student discipline. The topic emerged spontaneously in all interviews in a variety of places during the interview.

Mentors are selected based on disciplinary skills, experience and ability to work with adults. (Administrator: Riverside ISD)

The school's personality is still growing. This is the second year with a school-wide discipline plan. Through that plan we have come together as a team. (Administrator: Riverside ISD)

New teachers need to know that perfect lesson plans aren't real. They need to know discipline and how to deal with children. (Veteran Teacher: Springdale ISD)

New teachers need to provide a disciplined classroom, a passion for teaching and have receptivity to information to help them be successful. (Veteran Teacher: Riverside ISD)

Discipline is a problem because we don't get the response we want. (Veteran Teacher: Riverside ISD)

Of the things that surprised me, the lack of discipline from the kids tops the list. (New Teacher: Riverside ISD)

It is now your classroom and you have to figure out what to do with it and how to teach and what rules to set. (New Teacher: Riverside ISD)

We are prepared to plan lessons, but not for disciplining children, there is not enough time. (New Teacher: Springdale ISD)

Routinely it feels like we are not backed up as much as we would like to be. There is no real (meaningful) punishment or reward that goes with anything. ... The good kids suffer because of bad kids. There is no reward for being good so why be good. (New Teacher: Springdale ISD)

(Moving from middle school to high school) the high school teaching staff surprised me specifically with their take-charge attitude and assertiveness with students. They get the job done. (Administrator: Springdale ISD)

New teachers need to learn to deal with those students who want to push the envelope. (Veteran Teacher: Riverside ISD)

Administering disciplinary rules is hard because it is new to the new teacher. You have to do it, you have to step in. (Veteran Teacher: Riverside ISD)

Some of the kids are going to do the work and learn, but 90% of the time, the kids could care less. Some kids drive you crazy wanting more work and others no matter what you do, they are never happy. (New Teacher: Riverside ISD)

The students are good, but I get frustrated because my students don't respect everybody. (New Teacher: Riverside ISD)

It seems like you are a counselor more than a teacher at times. Learning to deal with issues like what to say to a girl who is worried that she is pregnant and doesn't want her mother to know. Being a younger teacher provokes discussions about drugs and sex and stuff that are hard to deal with. (New Teacher: Riverside ISD)

Discipline is a big thing for most new teachers partly because of age. It is harder for the students to respect a new teacher as opposed to the teacher who is 50 years old. (New Teacher: Riverside ISD)

In addition to differing levels of miscommunication occurring within specific critical topic areas, each of the three groups used different referents of time. Specifically, new teachers spoke in terms of hours and weeks, veteran teachers usually talked in terms of months and grading periods, while administrators generally talked in terms of years.

This year we are on a modified block schedule. (Administrator: Springdale ISD)

A few years ago, we had an incredible number of experienced teachers (Administrator: Springdale ISD)

New teacher luncheons and a mentoring program were established in the last two years. (Administrator: Riverside ISD)

There is no formal program evaluation but I look for mentors and new teachers to be together at critical points in the school year. (Administrator: Springdale ISD)

There is an in-service offered to mentors and new teachers twice a year. (Administrator: Springdale ISD)

The mentor and new teacher meet monthly throughout the semester.
(Veteran Teacher: Springdale ISD)

We get staff development about once per semester (Veteran Teacher:
Riverside ISD)

There are only so many hours in a day. (New Teacher: Riverside ISD)
Springdale ISD

Then there is all the things that are thrown at you day by day. No day is
the same. (New Teacher: Riverside ISD)

Furthermore, while veteran teachers and administrators saw organizational boundaries
similarly, while new teachers saw different boundaries than those expressed by the other
two groups. Specifically, veteran teachers and principals placed boundaries between
students, faculty, staff and parents, whereas new teachers placed more boundaries
subdividing these groupings by experience and grade level or subject area as applicable.

This middle school has 560 students, 45 faculty members and an
excellent support staff. (Administrator: Riverside ISD)

A lot of our teachers wind up at the high school. (Veteran Teacher:
Springdale ISD)

We overload our teachers at the beginning of the year. (Veteran
Teacher: Riverside ISD)

Parents and teachers are working well together and have been for several
years. (Administrator: Riverside ISD)

The 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade teachers all seem to be working together
well. (New Teacher: Riverside ISD)

The principal meets with all of us second grade teachers about once
every two weeks to discuss teaching and what our students are learning.
The other new teacher and I mainly listen to the experienced teachers in
the meeting. (New Teacher: Riverside ISD)

There were very few fifth grade parents at the PTA meeting, in fact
many fourth grade parents didn't come either. (New Teacher:
Springdale ISD)

In summarizing the results, it appears that miscommunication is occurring among new
teachers, veteran teachers and administrators on issues of new teacher support as well as
the efficacy of new teacher support programs. Furthermore, this miscommunication is
occurring at multiple levels of the organization as evidenced by the differing perspectives
of the different groups in regards to boundaries and the framing of time. Finally, a
substantial portion of the interview content dwelled on the topic of student discipline at
numerous points in each interview despite the fact that there were no questions specifically
addressing this topic. Although this prominent theme showed signs of miscommunication
across groups, each group tended to discuss different aspects of student discipline and
discuss these aspects from varying perspectives.

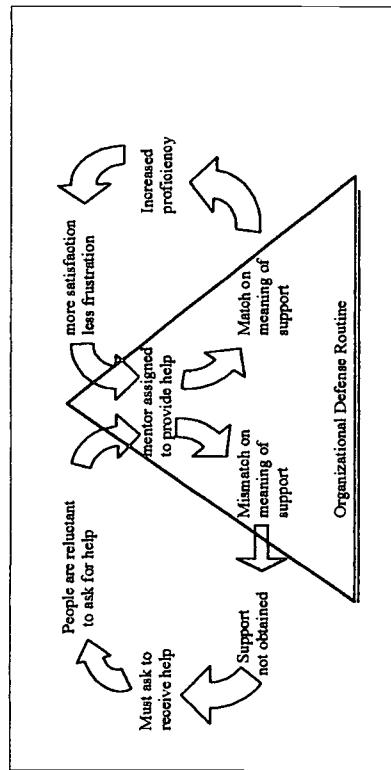
Discussion

Argyris (1993) asserted that there were essentially two ways that individuals behaved in
organizations. These behaviors are governed by values and are demonstrated by specific
strategies an individual commonly uses. Model I is most frequently seen. Its governing
values are: "Achieve your intended purpose, Maximize winning and minimize losing,
Suppress negative feelings, and behave according to what you consider rational" (p. 53).
Its most prevalent action strategies are: "Advocate your position. Evaluate the thoughts
and actions of others (and your own thoughts and actions). Attribute causes for whatever
you are trying to understand" (p. 53). In contrast, Model II governing values are to obtain
valid information, make an informed choice and vigilantly monitor, implementation of a
choice to detect and correct error. Model II action strategies are deliberately crafted to

encourage inquiry and testing by others. Organizational defensive routines are created and sustained by a circular casual process self-reinforcing an individual's Model I behavior.

Model I produces strategies that by-pass and cover-up factual data. Because of potential embarrassment or threat, these by-pass and cover-up strategies extend to work groups and potentially throughout the organization creating areas of assumptions that are never tested because the topics are undiscussable. Model I behaviors were observed almost exclusively in both school districts. Specifically, miscommunication about the meaning of support between the new teacher and the mentor sets in motion an organizational defense routine. The new teacher assumes that the mentor will just step in and help, while the mentor is waiting to be asked to help. In the meantime, other teachers refrain from providing direct support because a mentor has been appointed. This mismatch can only be corrected when the assumptions about support are discussed, but they are never discussed because Model I behavior prevent confronting assumptions made by others within an organization. These assumptions about support become undiscussable and an organizational defense routine becomes established further preventing the discussion of such assumptions. Figure 1 below shows this organizational routine. Note most mentorship programs are built assuming that there is a match on the meaning of support. The data provided by this study demonstrates that this is not necessarily so. When there is a match, new teacher productivity increases, there is an increased degree of satisfaction and less frustration for the new teacher (Berliner, 1986; Hurling-Austin, 1992). When there is not a match, support is never obtained, new teachers become even more reluctant to ask for help and therefore they never receive the help they need to succeed (Cady, Schaak-Distad & Germundsen, 1998; Gehrk, 1991; Gratch, 1998; Tellez, 1992).

Figure 1
Systemic Impact of the Mentoring Relationship

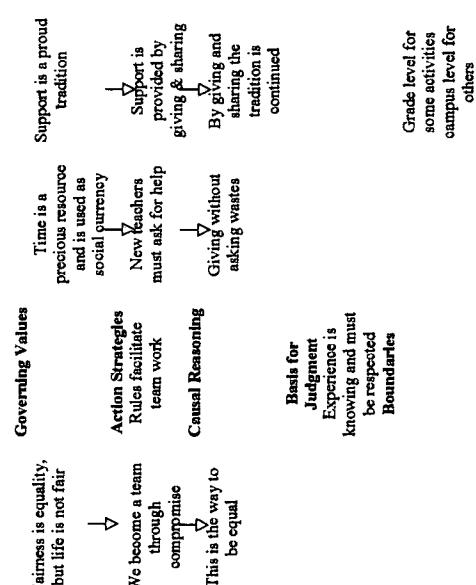


Despite the apparent fit of the data to Argyris' (1999) theories, there is also evidence to support the pupil control. Specifically, the governing values in both school districts were centered on the issue of student discipline. In one district the shared governing value of the organization was the notion that student discipline was critical to quality instruction. The other school district, a district with a long-running formal teacher induction program, saw student discipline as critical to quality instruction and the means by which teachers were judged. Themes of student discipline, equity, fairness, and control were prevalent topics across all interviews. In fact by mapping the values and assumptions of the school districts, core assumptions and strategies within the organization are derived from pupil control and student discipline. Figures 2 and 3 provide organizational assumption maps of two districts studied. By applying the collected data and constructing these maps, it is demonstrated that pupil control is not a competing model, but rather a nested into the organization of schools as an inherent governing value.

Figure 2
Organizational Defense Routine Map for Springdale ISD



Figure 3
Organizational Defense Routine Map for Riverside ISD



In conclusion, further studies are needed to determine empirical differences between various organizational models used to describe our schools. This study indicates that pupil control is a governing value of the two districts studied; therefore, favoring the Argyris (1999) organizational routine model. It is more parsimonious—undiscussable assumptions impact organizational routines. It better explains the contradictory findings in the literature on new teacher mentoring—agreement or disagreement on assumptions of support existed in the studies but were not controlled for. And finally it can account for the prevalence of pupil control throughout school organizations—it is a governing value. Therefore, the pupil control model seems to be a static force within a more dynamic organizational model proposed by Argyris (1999). However it must be pointed out that the methods that

demonstrate this were developed to examine the dynamics of organizational culture, and therefore could contain assumptions favoring Argyris' model.

Clearly more studies are needed to explore this area to include a meta-analysis of the terrain. By establishing a clearer understanding of the empirical studies that have been conducted and a review of the theoretical views the explain these data sets, a clearer understanding can emerge that will improve educational practice and enhance the ability of school organizations to adapt to a constantly changing stream of mandates, policies, and public demands.

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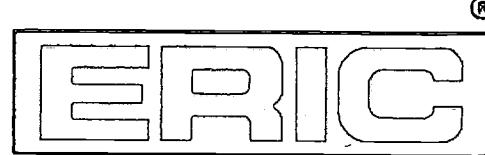
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